DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 880 FL 019 333

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TITLE The Definite Article with Proper Names for Referring to People in the Greek of Acts.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 13p.; In: Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session, Volume 35, p91-102, 1991; see FL 019 329.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Biblical Literature; *Determiners (Languages); *Greek; Language Patterns; Language Research; Linguistic Theory; Onomastics; Uncommonly Taught Languages
IDENTIFIERS *Names

ABSTRACT

A study examined the presence or absence of the article with proper names for people in the Bible's book of Acts, using four categories of description, including: (1) the unmarked patterns involving the first mention of a participant and further references to the participant in the same incident; (2) the reintroduction of participants after an absence; (3) further references to a participant in the same incident that are anarthrous as contrasted with arthrous; and (4) the use of the article with names in reported speeches. It is proposed that, in different contexts, the four situations illustrate the principle that anarthrous references to particular, known participants either mark the participant as locally salient or highlight the speech that he or she utters. A list of twelve references is included. (MSE)

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THE DEFINITE ARTICLE WITH PROPER NAMES FOR REFERRING TO PEOPLE IN THE GREEK OF ACTS[1]

Stephen H. Levinsohn

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1 Introduction

Proper names in Koine Greek occur sometimes with a preceding article and sometimes without one. For example, both *ho Galliōnos* (the Gallio) and *Ø Galliōnos* (Gallio) occur (Acts 18:14,12). Insofar as a consensus among Greek grammarians exists, it is that names of persons normally are not preceded by the article (they are **anarthrous**), but may be preceded by the article (be **arthrous**) if the reference is anaphoric. However, Winer (1882:140) considers that, in fact, the use of the article with proper names "can hardly be reduced to any rule".

Nevertheless, if one concentrates on individual New Testament authors, rather than trying to generalize across all writers, the use of the article with proper names is quite systematic. In particular, in the Greek of the Acts of the Apostles, the presence versus absence of the article is related to two main factors: the **status** of the participant (whether, at the macrolevel, s/he is the central character or not) and the local **salience** of the participant and/or the action(s) he performs.

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[1] This article is based on Heimerdinger and Levinsohn forthcoming. The theme is considered also in Levinsohn forthcoming.

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Comrie (1989:199) says that "salience relates to the way in which certain actants present in a situation are seized on by humans as foci of attention". Thus, out of the cast of participants involved in events being described by an author, one or two may be marked as being most salient to the story at that point. Such participants are the ones that the listener or reader should focus upon, presumably because of the significant acts in which they will be involved.

Hopper and Thompson (1984:719) have shown that, in many languages, the presence versus the absence of words like 'one' or 'a certain', in connection with the introduction of a participant, depends on whether or not "it figures in the discourse as a salient participant". See, for instance, the following example which they cite (ibid.) from modern Hebrew. In (1a), the use of the word for 'one' indicates that 'book' is locally salient, and indeed it becomes the topic of the following clause. In (1b), the word for 'one' is not used, since 'book' is not salient; it features no more in the discourse.

(1) a. I sat there and read a book (*sefer-exad*), and it was an excellent book.
b. I read a book (*sefer*), and a couple of newspapers, and then went home.

It should therefore not be a surprise that, once a participant has been introduced, further references to him or her also indicate whether or not s/he is salient. Indeed, various articles describe how particular forms of reference identify the "thematic character" (Grimes 1975:337f; see also Newman 1978:96) or "thematic participant" (Levinsohn 1978) of a section of text.

Before discussing in detail the factors which determine the presence versus absence of the article with proper names in Acts, I need to point out that non-declinable names (i.e., those of non-Greek origin) typically are arthrous when not in the nominative (e.g. *ton Isaak* 'the Isaac' in Acts 7:8), presumably to indicate the case of the noun.[2]

An exception to the rule just stated involves named possessors in articular possessive phrases. In such phrases, it is the norm for the possessor to be anarthrous, even if

[2] However, see Teeple 1973:303. Heirmerdinger (personal communication) also considers it possible "that it is not case which affects the article with O.T. names" and that the conclusions of the present article, as they involve such names, "will only work with certain MSS".

the noun is not declinable (e.g. *ton Saoul huion Ø Kis* 'the Saul son [of] Kis', Acts 13:21).[3] (See Sect. 2 for one circumstance under which reference to a named possessor is arthrous.)

I now consider the presence versus absence of the article with proper names, for people in the book of Acts, using the following four categories of description:

- the unmarked patterns involving the first mention of a participant and further references to the participant in the same incident (Sect. 1);
- the reintroduction of participants after an absence (Sect. 2);
- further references to a participant in the same incident which are anarthrous, instead of arthrous (Sect. 3);
- the use of the article with names in reported speeches (Sect. 4).

By dividing my discussion into four parts, I do not mean to imply that I am illustrating different principles. Rather, in different contexts, they illustrate a single principle: *ANARTHROUS REFERENCES TO PARTICULAR, KNOWN PARTICIPANTS EITHER MARK THE PARTICIPANT AS LOCALLY SALIENT, OR HIGHLIGHT THE SPEECH WHICH S/HE UTTERS.*

2 The unmarked patterns

When a participant is first mentioned, reference to him or her by name typically is **anarthrous**. However, once s/he has been (re)introduced, subsequent references to him or her by name within the same incident are **arthrous**.

The references to Gallio in Acts 18:12,14,17, shown in (2) below, illustrate this pattern. The introductory reference to him in v12 is anarthrous. Subsequent references, however, are arthrous.

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[3] Heirmerdinger (personal communication) disagrees: "When all the examples of a dependent genitive in an articular phrase are considered, it is found that the article is retained whenever the reference to the person is anaphoric. When the article is omitted, the reference is either a set phrase like 'the name of Jesus'... or a first mention."

(2) Acts 18:12-18

	subject	*non-subject*	*summary of contents*
v12	Ø Gallio		(was proconsul)
	(the Jews)	the Paul	(attacked)
v14	the Paul		(was about to speak)
	the Gallio	(the Jews)	(said to)
v17	(all)	Ø Sosthenes	(turned on)
		the Gallio	(nothing mattered to)
v18	the Paul	(the brothers)	(left)
	Ø Priscilla & Aquila		(with him)

The above pattern concurs with the assertion made in grammars of Greek that one of the reasons for using the article is when the referent of the noun concerned is "known, particular, previously mentioned" (Blass, Debrunner and Funk 1961, Sect. 252). However, it does NOT follow that, when the article is absent, the referent concerned is necessarily not known, not particular, not previously mentioned. (For instance, see the anarthrous reference in 18:26 to Priscilla and Aquila who had already been mentioned in v18.)

3 The reintroduction of participants

The reintroduction of a participant in a new incident may be arthrous or anarthrous. The determining factors are whether or not there is a single central character on stage around whom the section of the story is organized, and whether the participant being reintroduced is salient or not. The basic principle is as follows:

- reintroductions of the central character of the section, after a temporary absence, are arthrous (s/he is apparently assumed to be in the wings, under such circumstances, rather than being genuinely reintroduced);
- reintroductions of salient participants other than the central character are anarthrous.

The first half of the book of Acts features several Christian leaders (Peter, Stephen, Philip) who perform acts of significance to the story, i.e., they are salient. Whenever any of them is reintroduced after an absence, reference to him is anarthrous (provided he is locally salient, of course). None of them is treated as the central character.

For example, in chapter 12 ((3) below), Peter is reintroduced in v3 with an anarthrous reference; further

references to him by name in vv5-16 are arthrous (as per the principle of Sect. 1). These include an arthrous reference in a possessive phrase in v14 (*tēn phōnēn tou Petrou* 'the voice of the Peter'). (Other anarthrous reintroductions of Peter after an absence include 3:1, 8:14, 9:32, 10:9, 11:2.)

Similarly, the reintroductory reference to Barnabas and Saul in v25 is anarthrous, as is the reintroductory reference to Herod in v19 (scarcely a Christian leader, but a salient participant at this point in the narrative).

(3) Acts 12:1-13:1

	subject	*non-subject*	*summary of contents*
v1	Ø Herod	(some of the church)	(arrested)
v2		Ø James	(killed)
v3		Ø Peter	(arrested)
v5	the Peter		(was kept in prison)
v6	the Herod	(him)	(was about to bring out)
	the Peter		(was sleeping)
v7	(angel of.Lord)		(appeared)
		the Peter	(struck on side)
	. . .		
v11	the Peter		(came to himself)
v12		of the Mary the mother of John Mark	(went to the house)
v14	(maidservant)	of the Peter	(recognized the voice)
	. . .		
v16	the Peter		(kept on knocking)
	. . .		
v19	Ø Herod		(searching...)
v20		(Tyrians & Sidonians)	(was angry with)
		Ø Blastus	(having persuaded)
v21	the Herod		(sat on throne)
	. . .		
v25	Ø Barnabas & Saul		(returned from Jerusalem)
13:1	the Barnabas...		(list of prophets, etc.)

In the second half of the book, however, there is generally only one major Christian leader: Paul. Once he has been established as the main protagonist (single central character), reintroductory references to him, after an absence, typically are arthrous. See, for example, 18:18 (in (2)) and 25:23 (following the conversation between governor Felix and king Agrippa). (In the first half of the book, in contrast, reintroductory references to Paul are usually anarthrous; e.g. 12:25 in (3). A fascinating exception is 9:1.)

Exceptions to this last pattern are limited to occasions when another salient participant was on stage and Paul was definitely absent (not just in the wings). Thus, his reintroduction in 19:1 of (4) follows a section on the activities of Apollos (18:24-28), during which Paul was elsewhere (see v21).

(4) Acts 18:21-19:1

	subject	*non-subject*	*summary of contents*
v21	(he [Paul])		(set sail from Ephesus)
	. . .		
v24	Ø Apollos		(came to Ephesus)
v26	Ø Priscilla		
	& Aquila	(him)	(heard)
	. . .		
19:1	the Apollos		(was at Corinth)
	Ø Paul		(arrived at Ephesus)

Throughout the second half of the book of Acts, participants other than Paul are reintroduced anarthrously, if they are judged to be salient to the story. For example, Priscilla and Aquila are reintroduced anarthrously in 18:18 of (2) and again in 18:26 of (4).

Participants who are NOT locally salient are (re)introduced by name with the article employed. See, for example, 15:37 *ton Iōannēn ton kaloumenon Markon* 'the John the called Mark', cited in (6).

4 Anarthrous references to on-stage participants

Further references to on-stage participants normally are arthrous, as implied by the principle stated in Sect. 1. Anarthrous references to on-stage participants reflect the relative salience of the participant and/or the action(s) that s/he performs. I consider such references in two sub-groups: those that involve a switch of attention to a salient participant (Sect. 4.1), and those that occur in connection with the introduction of a key speech (Sect. 4.2).

4.1 Switches of attention

Anarthrous references to participants in connection with switches of attention to a salient participant may involve a switch: i) from a less salient to a more salient participant, or ii) from one salient participant to another.

4.1.1 Switches from a less salient to a more salient participant

One example of such a switch is 8:39f ('... the eunuch did not see him [Philip] again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip [*Ø Philipos*], however, appeared at Azotus...'). In the passage preceding this, in vv29-39a, the seven references to Philip by name have all been arthrous, as per the principle of Sect. 1, which says that, once (re)introduced, further references to a named participant in the same incident are arthrous. However, when the eunuch leaves the scene (v39) and attention switches from him to what happened to Philip, the reference to the latter is anarthrous.

In some passages, there are a series of switches from a less salient to a more salient participant. In 7:58-8:3 of (5) below, for instance, the references in 7:59 and 8:2 to Stephen are arthrous (he is rapidly becoming non-salient!). Saul is introduced anarthrously to the book in a possessive phrase in 7:58. What is noteworthy is that, when attention switches to him again in 8:1 and 8:3, the references again are anarthrous, as befits switches to a salient participant.

(5) Acts 7:58-8:3

	subject	*non-subject*	*summary of contents*
v58	(the witnesses)	Ø Saul	(laid their clothes at feet of)
v59		the Stephen	(stoned)
8:1	Ø Saul		(was approving of his death)
v2	(godly men)	the Stephen	(buried)
v3	Ø Saul	(the church)	(began to destroy)

A similar pattern is found in the opening verses of chapter 3, in the interaction between the lame man and Peter. Each time attention switches to Peter, references to him are anarthrous (vv4,6; see also v3). From the perspective of the story as a whole, Peter, rather than the lame man, is the salient participant.

4.1.2 Switches from one major participant to another

Acts 15:36-40 illustrates a series of such switches, involving Paul and Barnabas. Of particular note is the arthrous reference to Barnabas in v39b, at the point that he leaves the scene and ceases to be salient to the story.

(6) Acts 15:36-40

	subject	*non-subject*	*summary of contents*
v36	Ø Paul	Ø Barnabas	(said to)
v37	Ø Barnabas	the John the called Mark	(wanted to take)
v38	Ø Paul		(did not think it wise)
v39	(they)		(parted company)
	the Barnabas	the Mark	(took, sailed for Cyprus)
v40	Ø Paul	Ø Silas	(chose)

(6) involved contrastive switches of attention from one salient participant to another. (7) illustrates switches of attention which do NOT involve contrast: as attention switches to Peter (15:7), to Barnabas and Paul (v12) and to James (v13), each reference is anarthrous.

(7) Acts 15:6-13

	subject	*non-subject*	*summary of contents*
v6	(the apostles & elders)		(met)
v7	Ø Peter		(said)
v12	(the whole assembly)		(was silent)
		Ø Barnabas & Paul	(heard)
v13	(they)		(finished)
	Ø James		(spoke up)

4.2 Anarthrous references to key speeches

Anarthrous references to participants who make a key speech appear to have the rhetorical effect of marking that speech as of particular salience. Such cases differ from those considered in Sect. 4.1.1, in that they involve, not a switch of attention to a different participant, but a response by the addressee of the last speech. In such contexts, references to the speaker are typically anarthrous only if the speech is the key one of the incident concerned.

In 10:25ff, for example, references to the speakers are arthrous, until the key speech of vv34ff, which is introduced by an anarthrous reference to Peter.

(8) Acts 10:25-34

	subject	*non-subject*	*summary of contents*
v25	the Peter		
	the Cornelius	(him)	(entered)
v26	the Peter	(him)	(meeting)
	. . .		(raised, saying)
v30	the Cornelius		
v34	Ø Peter		(said)
			(said [key speech])

5 The article with names in reported speeches

In reported speeches, as in narrative, anarthrous references to participants who have already been mentioned indicate that the participant is salient to the argument. For example, in Stephen's speech in chapter 7 ((9) below), different historical characters in turn become salient. In the case of Moses, each time attention switches to him, the reference is anarthrous (vv22,29,32b). Only in v31 is the reference arthrous, reflecting the fact that, at this point, he is only a spectator, rather than an active participant in the story.

(9) Acts 7:8-32

	subject	*non-subject*	*summary of contents*
v8	(he)		
	Ø Isaac	the* Isaac	(begat) [*non-declinable]
	Ø Jacob	the* Jacob	(begat)
	. . .	(the 12 patriarchs)	(begat)
v20	Ø Moses		
v21	(the daughter of.Pharaoh)		(was born)
v22	Ø Moses	(him)	(took)
	. . .		(was trained)
v29	Ø Moses		
v30	(angel)		(fled)
v31	the Moses	(him)	(appeared to)
			(seeing, was wondering at sight)
	(his)		
	(voice of.Lord)		(approaching)
v32	Ø Moses		(became)
			(trembled with fear)

One feature to remember about reported speeches is that, even if a participant has already featured in the narrative in which a speech is embedded, the initial

reference in the speech may be anarthrous because, as far as the speaker is concerned, the reference is a first mention. For example, in 10:32, Cornelius tells Peter that the angel who had appeared to him said, 'Send to Joppa for Simon [*Ø Simōna*]...').

Contrast 13:2, in which the Holy Spirit speaks to the group of prophets and teachers assembled in Antioch. When He says, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul...', reference to them is arthrous (*ton Barnaban kai Saulon*), since they are present when the speech is made, and are not being introduced to the addressees for the first time.

Thus, the presence versus the absence of the article with proper names for people in the Greek of the Acts of the Apostles is systematic; it is likely to be so also with other writers.

This use or omission of the article with proper names is part of a larger picture which encompasses the use or omission of the article with nouns in general. In Levinsohn 1989, an article which primarily concerns constituent order in the book of Galatians, I describe how the presence or absence of the article with such nouns as *theos* 'God' and *pneuma* 'spirit' indicates whether the constituent concerned is rhematic (the most important piece of new information in the sentence), or whether it is simply part of the thematic information which leads up to the rheme. Such a description may readily be rephrased in terms of the salience of constituents which are anarthrous.

Thus, in Galatians 3:11 ((10) below), which the Revised Standard Version translates, 'Now it is evident that no man is justified before God by the law', the salient constituents are 'evident, clear' (*dēlon*), 'no man' (*oudeis*) and 'by law' (*en nomō*). If read orally, taking into account the context, stress will fall on some or all of these constituents, but not on 'before God' (*para tō theō*), since the reference to God is not particularly salient; rather, it is supportive of the salient constituents and consequently is arthrous.

(10) Galatians 3:11

hoti de en nomō oudeis dikaioutai *para tō theō* delon
that now by law no.one is.justified before the God clear

In 2:19, in contrast, 'to God' (*theō*) is contrasted with 'to law' (*nomō*), both being central or salient to the argument. Consequently, references to God and to law are anarthrous.

(11) Galatians 2:19

egō gar dia nomou nomō apethanon, hina *theō* zēsō
I for through law to.law I.died that to.God I.might live

References to 'the Spirit' in Galatians 3:2b (arthrous) and v3b (anarthrous) illustrate the operation of the same principle.

(12) Galatians 3:2b-3

v2b ex ergōn nomou *to pneuma* elabete ē ex akoēs pisteōs
by works of.law the Spirit you.received or by hearing of.faith

v3a houtōs anoētoi este;
thus foolish you.are

v3b enarxamenoi *pneumati* nyn sarki epiteleisthe;
having.begun in.Spirit now in.flesh you.are.perfected

In v2b, it is not necessary to argue that the reference is to the person rather than the power of the Holy Spirit (see Francis 1985:136f). Rather, the reference to the Spirit is supportive, because the focus of the sentence is the contrast between 'by works of law' and 'by hearing of faith', with the presupposition, 'you received the Spirit by some means'. In v3b, however, the contrast between 'in the Spirit' and 'in the flesh' is central or salient, hence the anarthrous references.

In general, then, anarthrous references to a participant who, in Blass, Debrunner and Funk's words (ibid.), is "known, particular", indicate the salience of the participant, whether within the sentence (as in the examples from Galatians) or in the passage as a whole.

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